

## ARTICLE-PACKAGING STRUCTURE

### CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application is a division of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/140,315, filed May 6, 2002, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,685,021 (attorney docket no. FUU 0017 PA).

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the packaging of articles for shipment and storage and, more specifically, to the bundling and packaging of elongate tubing products.

10        Tubing products and other elongate structures are often shipped in bundles because their size and shape makes them difficult to ship and store individually. Commonly, a combination of stock lumber and metal bands are used to arrange and secure a number of individual articles in a single bundle. The lumber is utilized to enable stacking and movement of the bundles and the metal bands are used to secure the products in the bundle. Unfortunately, irregularities in the  
15        lumber used for packaging can make it unreliable and difficult to work with. Indeed, it is typically necessary to discard a significant amount of lumber because it is unfit for bundling the product. According to one finding of the present invention, it has been noted by the present inventors that lumber products carry dirt, oils, and surface irregularities that often degrade and damage the articles to be bundled. Accordingly, there is a need for an improved scheme for  
20        bundling, storing and shipping articles, particularly elongate articles like tubes, rods, poles, beams, etc.

### BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

25        This need is met by the present invention wherein extruded article-packaging members are arranged to form a frame and are bound about a set of elongate articles like tubes, rods, poles, beams, etc. In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, an article-packaging member is provided defining an extruded cross section. The extruded cross section extends along substantially an entire length of the packaging member and comprises a structural